



**The Synaxis of the Icon of the Most Holy Lady  
the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary  
Called It Is Truly Meet  
Which the Holy Church Celebrates on June 11**

The Synaxis of the Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos is celebrated today for the following reason: In 980, during the Reign of Emperor Basil II, when Nicholas Chrysoberges was Ecumenical Patriarch, the holy Archangel Gabriel appeared in the guise of a monk to the disciple of a certain elder living in a hermitage belonging to the Monastery of Pantocrator on the Holy Mountain. During Matins, after the monk had chanted the customary hymn, “More honorable than the Cherubim...,” composed by Saint Cosmas the Hymnographer, the Angel chanted the same hymn, but with the following prelude: “It is truly meet to call thee blest, the Theotokos, the ever-blessed and all-immaculate and Mother of our God.” Marvelling at the hymn’s beauty, the monk asked his visitor—who appeared also to be a monk—to record this new text in writing, which the Angel did by miraculously inscribing the words on a piece of slate, using only his finger, and straightway he vanished from sight. This slate was brought to the Church of the Protaton, and from thence to Constantinople, to the imperial court and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as evidence of the miracle. Henceforth, this version of the hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos began to be chanted in the

Divine Liturgy in all the churches. The place where the miracle took place is now called *Adein*, from the Greek word which means “to sing.” The icon itself, before which this hymn was first chanted, is called “the icon of the Axion estin” (“It is truly meet”) and it is kept in the sanctuary of the Church of the Protaton on the Holy Mountain.

Texts: *The Great Horologion* © 1997 The Holy Transfiguration Monastery Brookline, Massachusetts 02445 and

*The Menaion* © 2006 The Holy Transfiguration Monastery Brookline, Massachusetts 02445

Icon courtesy The Holy Transfiguration Monastery Brookline, Massachusetts 02445

*Dismissal Hymn of the Mother of God. Fourth Tone*

*Be quick to anticipate*

**Y**E hosts of the Fathers of Mount Athos, gather today, \* and shout with a voice of jubilation, leaping for joy, and faithfully keeping feast: \* For, behold, the praise of the most pure Theotokos \* wondrously and awesomely is sung by the Angel; \* and therefore, as the Mother of God, we glorify her name.

*Kontakion of the Mother of God. Fourth Tone*

*On this day Thou hast appeared*

**A**LL of Athos keepeth feast \* this day in gladness; \* for it wondrously received from an Archangel’s holy hand \* the hymn whereby thou hast ever been praised as the Mother of God, as is truly meet.

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Selected Hymns from  
**THE MENAION**

**VESPERS**

*After the Proemial Psalm, we chant* Blessed is the man. *For* Lord, I have cried, *we allow for six verses and chant the following Stichera, repeating the first two.*

*First Tone. O strange wonder*

**O** STRANGE wonder! God, Who deigned to be \* born of thee, O virgin, \* and incarnate for our sakes, \* was pleased now to give a fitting tribute to thy hymn. \* He therefore sent Gabriel \* unto a monk in the form of a fellow monk \* to teach him thy hymn of praise \* by means of him who beforetime cried out to thee: \* Maiden Full of Grace, rejoice thou, \* with thee is the Lord our God, \* Who abundantly granteth \* His great mercy to the world through thee. (*Twice*)

**W**HO can tell thy wonders O pure Maid! \* Thou hast borne the Most High \* as a mother doth a son. And now, by thy providence, Archangel Gabriel \* from Heaven was sent to earth \* in a strange form to instruct us more perfectly \* in singing thy praise in hymns; \* for he himself had aforetime cried out to thee: \* Maiden Full of Grace, rejoice thou, \* with thee is the Lord our God, \* Who abundantly granteth \* His great mercy to the world through thee.

**O** STRANGE wonder! Shining Gabriel, \* coming in the likeness \* of a monk appeareth to \* an elder's disciple in his cell alone by night \* and wondrously doth begin \* to chant the prelude, O Lady, unto thy hymn; \* he also then doth inscribe \* upon a slate with his hand that which he had sung. \* Then he straightway disappeareth, \* to the monk's astonishment, \* that he might glorify thee, \* O all-lauded Lady full of grace.

Glory; both now. *First Tone*

**B**E ye joyful, O ye multitudes of solitaries and cenobites of the Holy Mountain, and leap for joy in gladness, as ye offer hymns of thanksgiving unto the Virgin. For behold, by her providence, through the Archangel she hath imparted unto us her angelic hymn. It is truly meet to call the blest, and to acclaim her as the Mother of the Creator of all things, Christ our God. She is more honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, and she doth save our souls from perils.



**SAINTS JOACHIM AND ANNA  
HOLDING OUR THEOTOKOS  
WHO BEARS THE UNFADING ROSE**

## MATINS



### † THE ICON “ΑΧΙΟΝ ΕΣΤΙΝ” (“IT IS TRULY MEET”)

BEFORE WHICH THE MONK WAS CHANTING WHEN THE ARCHANGEL  
GABRIEL JOINED HIM AND GAVE HIM THE HYMN “IT IS TRULY MEET.”  
† THIS ICON IS TO BE FOUND ON MOUNT ATHOS.

## OIKOS

**L**ET the multitude of the Fathers of Athos be glad of heart, for behold, to the Virgin’s hymn which Cosmas the divine Hymnographer once marvelously sang unto her, Gabriel now singeth a prelude, saying, It is truly meet to call thee blessed, the Theotokos, the ever-blessed and all-immaculate and Mother of our God. He commanded the monk to whom he had appeared that all should sing this prelude to her hymn; and inscribing it on a slate with his hand, he suddenly became invisible. As for the astonished monk, as he had been taught, he praised the Mother of God, as is truly meet. (Please see note below.)

## SYNAXARION

✠ On the eleventh of this Month we celebrate the Synaxis of the Icon of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary called It Is Truly Meet (*Axion Estin*), and of the Archangel Gabriel in Adein.

### Verses

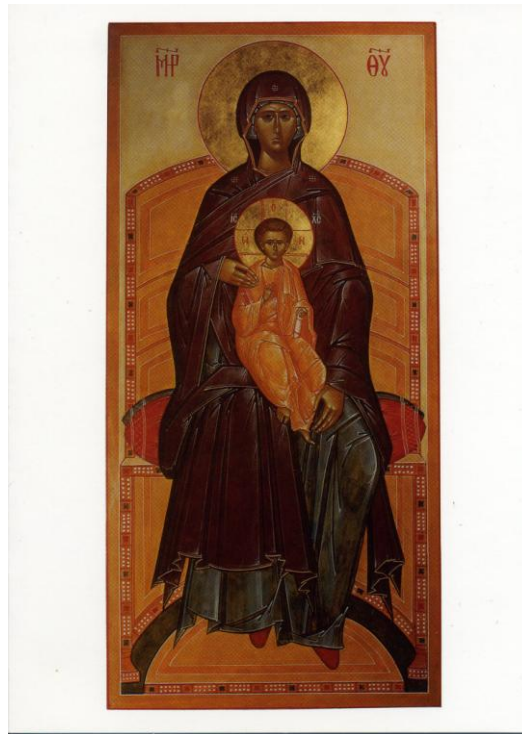
O Gabriel, thou once sangest Rejoice unto the Maiden,  
And now thou singest: It is meet to sing thy praises.

On the eleventh we praise our Lady, as is meet.

By the intercessions of Thy Saints, O God, have mercy on us.

**EXAPOSTILIARION**  
*Second Tone. Hearken, ye women*

**G**ATHER together, skip for joy, \* in gladness keep the festival: \* for Gabriel the Archangel \* in a monk's habit and likeness \* appeareth now unto a monk: \* for the first time he crieth out \* the prelude to the Virgin's hymn \* upon the all-blessed Mountain \* that hath her as its protectress.



## OUR †HEOTOKOS ENTHRONED

Courtesy Saint Gregory of Sinai Monastery <http://www.gsinai.com/index.html>

Note: Shortly after the revelation of the hymn, "[Axion Estin](#)," this hymn was added to the worship of the Church in the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom as the Megalynarion which is chanted after the Priest's Exclamation, "[Especially our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary](#)."

Thus, we have another instance in which, with the eyes of faith, (cf. Acts 26:18) we see that the Orthodox Church is "[the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man](#)" (Heb: 8:2). The Faith of the Church rests not upon human philosophy, but upon the revelation of the Lord. We thank God for "[the Holy and Blameless Faith of the Pious and Orthodox Christians](#)," (Prayer at the close of Vespers) "[the faith which was once delivered to the Saints](#)" (Jude 3).